

# Dancing on the shoulders of giants

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## PROPOSITIONS

### PROPOSITIONS FROM PART A

- 1. Radical human transformation of the ecosphere justifies an equally radical transformation of organised human life.*
- 2. There is a clear moral and pragmatic imperative for universities to navigate therapeutic transformations towards sustainability.*
- 3. Action research, as a vehicle and paradigm of inquiry, helps gauge and effectuate universities' organisational transformation for sustainability.*
- 4. An integrated metatheory of transformation allows a deeper appreciation of the rules of the game: integrate multiple theoretical lenses to diagnose and navigate the potential and type of systemic transformation required to meet the ends of sustainability.*
- 5. Deep-seated obstacles to organisational transformation are rooted in collective cognitive 'intelligence' or mental models embodied in the culture of how an institution works, i.e. simplifying heuristics and systematic biases, norms and value systems.*
- 6. With roots in how ecosystems work, the organisation-as-organism analogy is a helpful way to perceive interconnectivity and perform more comprehensive diagnoses of organisational-social environments; planned interventions can then be in greater accord with the reality of the system to limit the negative impact caused by dysfunctional and pathological management patterns.*
- 7. Organisational diagnostics should eventually require the same level of clinical experience and expertise as a doctor or therapist: a rigorous, systematic and holistic understanding of various pathologies and their diagnoses and prognoses from the standpoint of the organisation-organism analogy.*

### PROPOSITIONS FROM PART B

- 8. Organisational transformation of a system for sustainability evolves it towards a state of higher resilience, responsiveness and purposefulness, in synchronicity with its socio-ecological surroundings, in bursts of rapid, discontinuous change that punctuate the initial dynamic equilibrium or system state.*
- 9. Rapid and discontinuous change over most or all domains of organisational activity is, over time, interspersed with relatively calmer periods of organisational development that are also important to build a foundation that avoids 'slipping back'.*
- 10. Small changes in strategies, structures, and power distributions often do not accumulate to produce organisational transformation. However, if consistently applied, ownership is shared and implementation is mediated in deliberation, they may culminate in long-term organisational development.*
- 11. Significant 'environmental' changes and chief executive officer succession are key opportunities or catalysts of organisational transformations, often knocked-on or triggered by a shock to the system from surrounding institutional and policy architecture.*